Gaines Greenbelt

2018 Annual Report

Submitted by the City of Sunset Valley

Introduction

The Gaines Greenbelt is owned and managed by the City of Sunset Valley as part of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP). The Gaines Greenbelt provides habitat for the federally endangered Golden-Cheeked Warbler (*Setophaga chrysoparia*, GCWA) and a portion contains a public use hike and bike trail. Sunset Valley has signed a Managing Partner Agreement with the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan (BCCP), The Sunset Valley – BCCP Managing Partner Agreement adds the Sunset Valley Gaines Greenbelt to the BCP Barton Creek Macrosite. The Managing Partner Agreement was officially filed in 2014.

The Gaines Greenbelt parcel is approximately 21.9 acres located in Travis County, Texas, at the northern edge of the City of Sunset Valley. The parcel's south side borders the back lot lines of residential sites, a hotel, and a Texas Department of Transportation stormwater pollution prevention facility located along US Highway 71/State Highway 290 West; east of the tract lies a larger-lot residential area; and, the remaining parcel borders the City of Austin's Barton Creek Greenbelt trail system (Appendix A).

Golden-cheeked Warbler Surveys

Between March and May of this year presence/absence surveys were conducted in the Gaines Greenbelt consistent with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service protocols. No Golden-cheeked Warblers were recorded on these visits. The survey does note that the Gaines Greenbelt is suitable habitat for Golden-cheeked Warblers. Complete results of the presence/absence survey can be found in Appendix B.

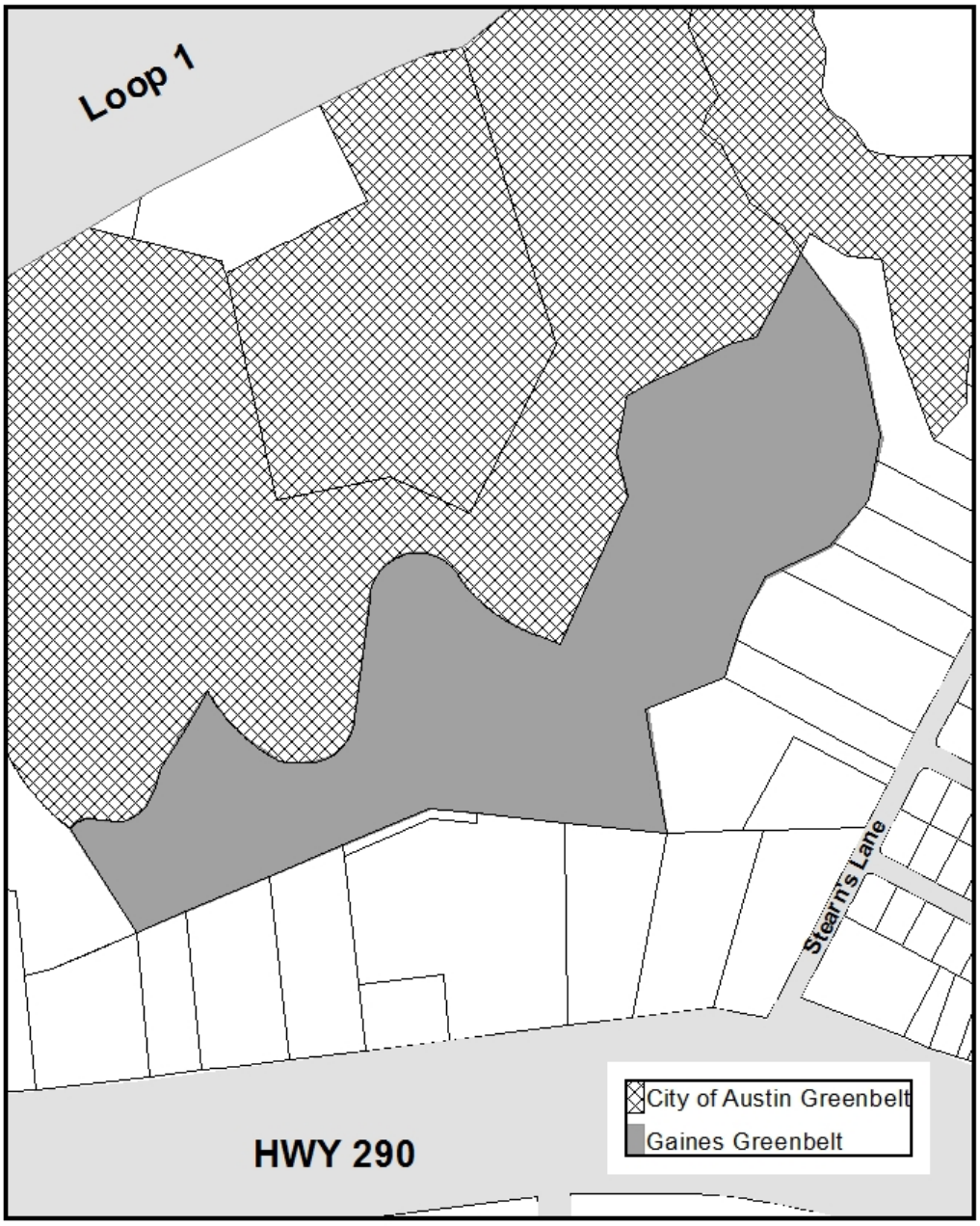
Trail Management Activities

Hill Country Conservancy (HCC) oversees the operation and maintenance of the Violet Crown Trail within the Gaines Greenbelt. HCC will generate a separate report that details all trail management activities within the area of the Violet Crown Trail.

Budget

The budget for the Gaines Greenbelt is attached in Appendix C. Budgetary expenditures only reflect the cost of consultants. The City of Sunset Valley does not track staff time in regards to open space management.

Appendix A
Map of Gaines Greenbelt



Appendix B

ENDANGERED SPECIES SURVEY SUMMARY
FOR GAINES GREENBELT,
IN TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

BOWMAN PROJECT NO. 009935-01-001

MAY 21, 2018

1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

PROJECT NAME:	Gaines Greenbelt Golden-cheeked Warbler Survey
COUNTY:	Travis County, Texas
LOCATION:	Approximately 0.5 mile north of the City of Sunset Valley between Mopac (Loop 1) and U.S. 290
USGS 7.5-QUAD:	Oak Hill, Texas
PROPERTY SIZE:	Approximately 21 acres
CLIENT:	City of Sunset Valley Public Works Department – Environmental Programs Attn: Carolyn Meredith 3205 Jones Road Sunset Valley, Texas 78745
SUBJECT SPECIES:	Golden-cheeked warbler (GCWA, *Setophaga chrysoparia*)
HABITAT AREA:	GCWA – Approx. 21 acres of potential suitable habitat
SURVEY PERSONNEL:	Sarah Weber, Silas Ott, Grady Terry
SURVEY DATES:	April 4 – May 12, 2018 (Table 1)
TOTAL SURVEY TIME:	Approximately six hours (Table 1)
NUMBER OF VISITS:	6

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2.0 METHODS

This endangered species survey summary report documents the Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCWA) presence/absence (p/a) surveys for the above-mentioned project. This summary report covers the approximately 21-acre City of Sunset Valley Gaines Greenbelt in south-central Travis County, Texas (Figure 1). Survey methods were consistent with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) protocol for GCWA p/a surveys (USFWS 2010).

As shown in Table 1, six visits were made to each survey area, with all visits at least 5 days apart. Survey hours exceeded the minimum requirement of one hour per survey visit for 25 acres of potential habitat required for a complete survey. Weather conditions were acceptable for completing field surveys. Survey visits began within 30 minutes of sunrise or within 7 hours after sunrise.

Field observations and track logs (Figure 2) were recorded with Garmin GPS Map 64s receivers capable of 3-meter accuracy. On the final visit, audio playback recordings were used to confirm absence of golden-cheeked warblers. Sarah Weber, Silas Ott, and Grady Terry were covered by USFWS permit numbers TE-143922-2 and TE78959A-1.

3.0 HABITAT ASSESSMENT

The entire approximately 21-acre Gaines Greenbelt contains potentially suitable habitat for the GCWA. Ashe juniper woodlands occurred along the slopes and riparian hardwood woodlands occurred within and adjacent to the tributaries to Barton Creek. Field observations of habitat in the study area were generally consistent with the descriptions of suitable GCWA habitat provided in Campbell (2003). A list of plant species observed during the 2018 surveys is shown in Table 3. This list is not comprehensive and reflects vegetation that had identifiable characteristics present during the survey interval.

4.0 RESULTS

No observations of GCWA were made during the 2018 presence/absence surveys. Playback recordings confirmed absence of GCWA throughout the Project Site. Prior surveys in 2014 made 13 detections over 5 site visits. Although no detections were made during the 2018 surveys GCWA breeding and foraging habitat does exist on Gaines Greenbelt. Much of the site consists of Mature Ashe Juniper/ Mixed Hardwood Forest growing on slopes in mesic conditions, which is ideal GCWA breeding habitat.

Other bird species observed during the 2018 GCWA survey are listed in Table 2.

Plant species identified on site are listed in Table 3.

5.0 REFERENCES

Campbell, L. 2003. Endangered and threatened animals of Texas – Their life history and management. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Wildlife Division. Austin, Texas. 127 pp.

USFWS Section 10(a)(1)(A) Scientific Permit Requirements for Conducting Presence/Absence Survey and Habitat Assessments for the Endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler (2010). https://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/Documents/R2ES/GCWA_Survey_Guidelines_20100113.pdf

6.0 ATTACHMENTS

FIGURE 1.	Gaines Greenbelt Study Area
FIGURE 2.	Routes walked during the 2018 GCWA survey.
TABLE 1.	Survey dates, duration, personnel, and weather conditions for the 2018 Gaines Greenbelt GCWA P/A survey.
TABLE 2.	Birds observed on Gaines Greenbelt (Spring 2018).
TABLE 3.	Plants observed on Gaines Greenbelt (Spring 2018).

7.0 SIGNATURES

This report was prepared by professional biologists at the consulting firm of Bowman Consulting Group, Ltd. in conformance with the methods and limitations described herein. The findings of this submittal are completely and accurately documented in this application package.

PREPARED BY:



SIGNATURE

SARAH A. WEBER,
CERTIFIED WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST
SENIOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGER
PRINTED NAME

MAY 21, 2018
DATE

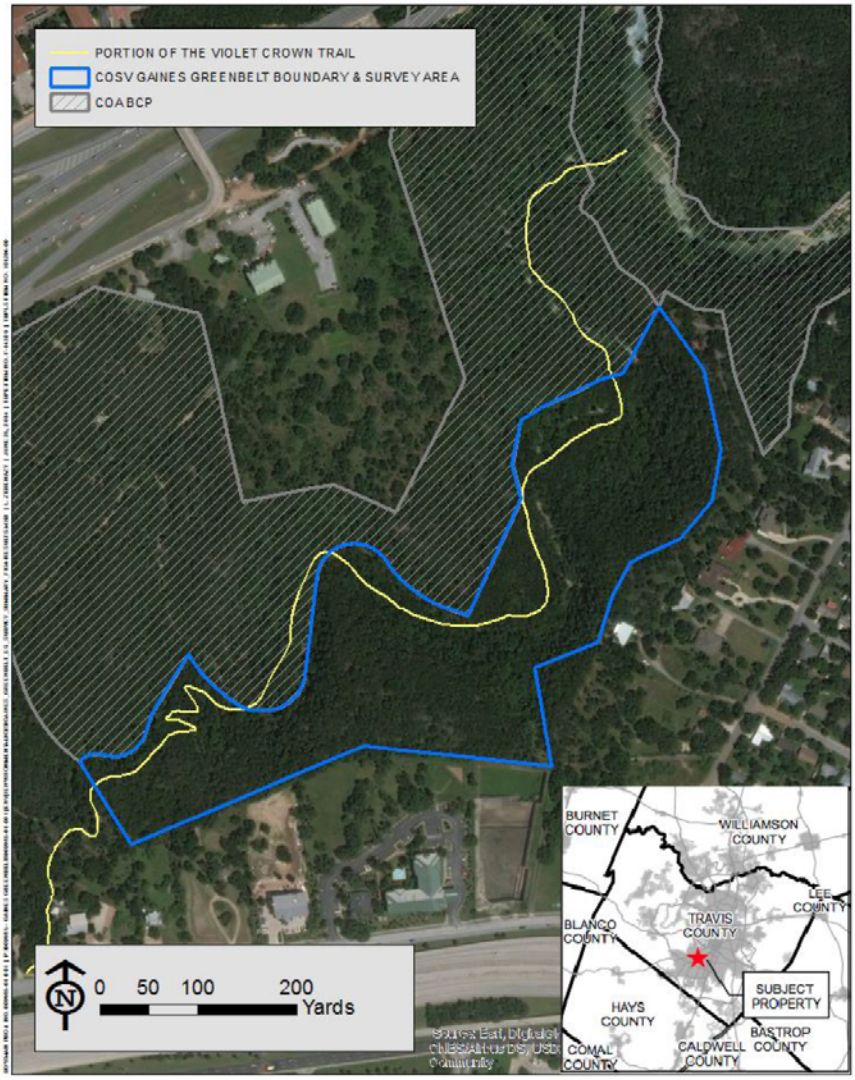


FIGURE 1
STUDY AREA
CITY OF SUNSET VALLEY GAINES GREENBELT, TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

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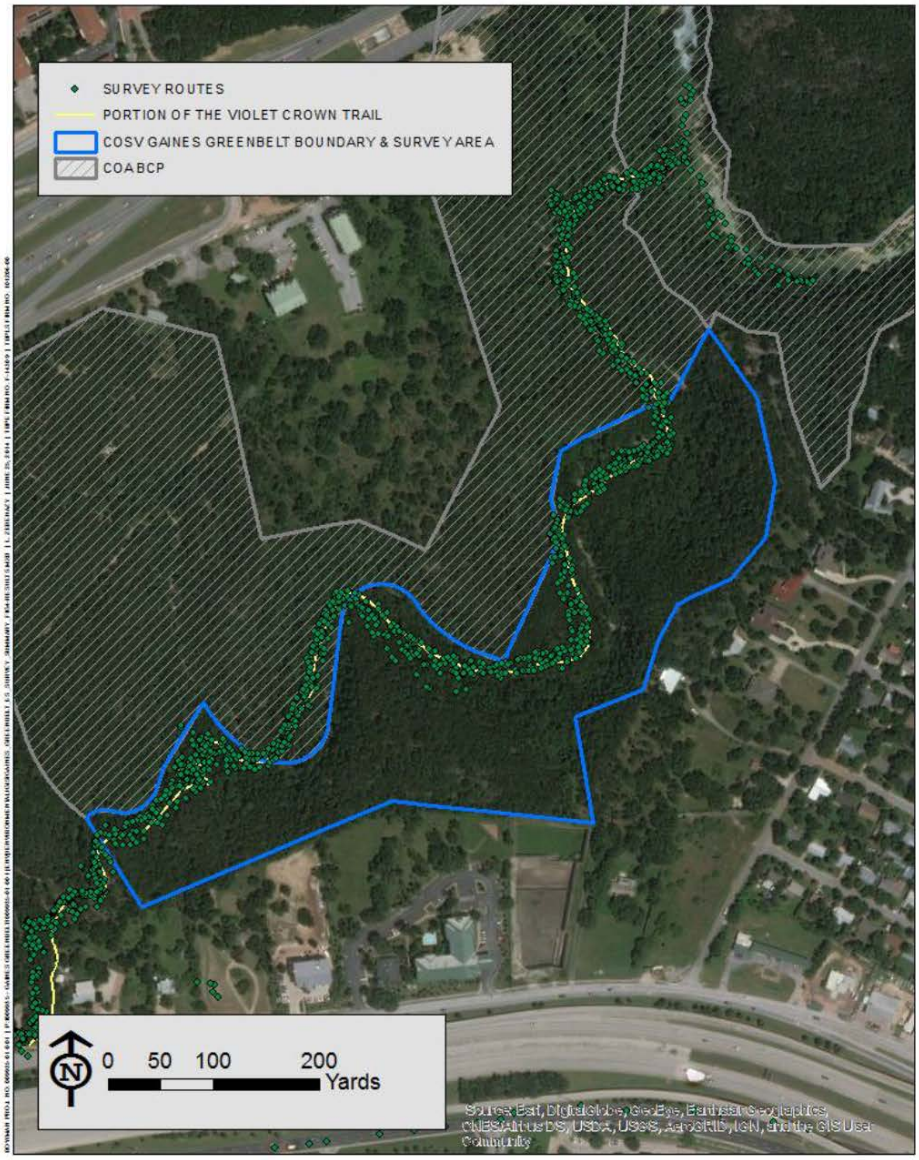


FIGURE 2

ROUTES WALKED DURING THE 2018 GCW SURVEY

CITY OF SUNSET VALLEY GAINES GREENBELT, TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

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TABLE 1. SURVEY DATES, DURATION, PERSONNEL, & WEATHER CONDITIONS FOR THE 2018 GAINES GREENBELT GCW P/A SURVEY.

Date	Time			Temperature (°F)		Wind Direction		Wind Speed (mph)		Cloud Cover (percent)		Personnel	Comments
	Start	End	Total Hrs	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End		
4/4/2018	9:00	10:00	1:00	56	59	N	NW	5-10	5-10	25	25	Sarah Weber, Silas Ott	
4/11/2018	9:15	10:15	1:00	61	67	Variable	Variable	0-5	0-5	10	0	Silas Ott	
4/18/2018	8:30	9:30	1:00	70	72	Variable	Variable	0-5	0-5	100	100	Silas Ott	
4/25/2018	8:45	9:45	1:00	68	76	Variable	Variable	0-5	0-5	10	0	Silas Ott	
5/2/2018	8:45	9:45	1:00	74	75	SSE	SSE	5-10	5-10	100	100	Silas Ott, Grady Terry	
5/12/2018	9:00	10:00	1:00	74	79	Variable	Variable	0-5	0-5	25	10	Silas Ott	
Total Survey Time:			6:00:00										

TABLE 2. BIRDS OBSERVED ON GAINES GREENBELT (SPRING 2018).

Common Name	Scientific Name
Birds	
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	*Nyctanassa violacea*
Red-shouldered Hawk	*Buteo lineatus*
White-winged Dove	*Zenaida asiatica*
Chimney Swift	*Chaetura pelagica*
Black-chinned Hummingbird	*Archilochus alexandri*
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	*Picoides scalaris*
Eastern Phoebe	*Sayornis phoebe*
Great Crested Flycatcher	*Myiarchus crinitus*
White-eyed Vireo	*Vireo griseus*
Red-eyed Vireo	*Vireo olivaceus*
Blue Jay	*Cyanocitta cristata*
Carolina Chickadee	*Poecile carolinensis*
Black-crested Titmouse	*Baeolophus atricristatus*
Canyon Wren	*Catherpes mexicanus*
Carolina Wren	*Thryothorus ludovicianus*
Bewick's Wren	*Thryomanes bewickii*
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	*Polioptila caerulea*
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	*Regulus calendula*
American Robin	*Turdus migratorius*
Hermit Thrush	*Catharus guttatus*
Cedar Waxwing	*Oreothlypis celata*
Nashville Warbler	*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*
Yellow Warbler	*Setophaga petechia*
Yellow-rumped Warbler	*Setophaga coronata*
Spotted Towhee	*Pipilo maculatus*
Northern Cardinal	*Cardinalis cardinalis*
Painted Bunting	*Passerina ciris*
Lesser Goldfinch	*Spinus psaltria*
House Finch	*Haemorhous mexicanus*
House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*

TABLE 3. PLANT SPECIES OBSERVED ON GAINES GREENBELT (SPRING 2018).

Common Name	Scientific Name
Trees	
Ashe Juniper	*Juniperus ashei*
Deciduous Holly	*Ilex decidua*
Yaupon Holly	*Ilex vomitoria*
Chinese Tallow	*Sapium sebiferum*
Texas Redbud	*Cercis canadensis*
Live Oak	*Quercus fusiformis*
Spanish Oak	*Quercus texana*
Shin Oak	*Quercus sinuata*
Black Walnut	*Juglans nigra*
Chinaberry	*Melia azedarach*
Red Mulberry	*Morus rubra*
Japanese Ligustrum	*Ligustrum japonicum*
Texas Ash	*Fraxinus texensis*
Sycamore	*Platanus occidentalis*
Escarpment Black Cherry	*Prunus serotina*
Box Elder	*Acer negundo*
Western Soapberry	*Sapindus saponaria*
Gum Bumelia	*Sideroxylon lanuginosum*
American Elm	*Ulmus americana*
Cedar Elm	*Ulmus crassifolia*
Sugar Hackberry	*Celtis laevigata*
Shrubs	
Evergreen Sumac	*Rhus virens*
Shrubby Bonsett	*Eupatorium havanense*
Agarita	*Berberis trifoliolata*
Heavenly Bamboo	*Nandina domestica*
Rough Leaf Dogwood	*Cornus drummondii*
Texas Persimmon	*Diospyros texana*
Bush Croton	*Croton fruticulosus*
Eve's Necklace	*Sophora affinis*
Moutain Laurel	*Sophora secundiflora*
Kidney Wood	*Eysenhardtia texana*
Lindheimer's Silktassle	*Garrya ovata*
Elbowbush	*Forestiera pubescens*
Brazil	*Condalia hookeri*
Mexican Plum	*Prunus mexicana*
Red Buckeye	*Aesculus pavia*
Engelmann's Prickly Pear	*Opuntia engelmannii*
Twist-Leaf Yucca	*Yucca rupicola*

TABLE 3 CONTINUED. PLANT SPECIES OBSERVED ON GAINES GREENBELT (SPRING 2018).

Common Name	Scientific Name
Vines	
Poison Ivy	*Toxicodendron radicans*
Green Milkweed	*Matela reticulata*
Japanese Honeysuckle	*Lonicera japonica*
Carolina Snailseed	*Cocculus carolinus*
Bracted Passion Flower	*Passiflora affinis*
Rattan	*Berchemia scandens*
Dewberry	*Rubus trivialis*
Winter Grape	*Vitis cinerea*
Virginia Creeper	*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*
Sevenleaf Creeper	*Parthenocissus heptaphylla*
Forbs	
Beggar's Tick	*Torilis arvensis*
Venus's Comb	*Scandex pecten-veneris*
Dandelion	*Taraxacum officinale*
Straggler Daisy	*Calyptocarpus vialis*
Giant Ragweed	*Ambrosia trifida*
Yarrow	*Acillea millefolium*
Frostweed	*Verbesina virginica*
Chickweed	*Stellaria media*
Texas Poinsettia	*Poinsettia cyathophora*
Nettleleaf Noseburn	*Tragia urticifolia*
Deer Pea Vetch	*Vicia ludoviciana*
Bur Clover	*Medicago polymorpha*
Bluebonnet	*Lupinus texensis*
Baby Blue-Eyes	*Nemophilia phacelioides*
Blue Curls	*Phacelia congesta*
Cedar Sage	*Salvia roemeriana*
Turk's Cap Mallow	*Malvaviscus arboreus*
Four O'clock	*Mirabilis jalapa*
Columbine	*Aquilegia canadensis*
Pennsylvannia Pelliotry	*Parietaria pensylvanica*
Corn-Salad	*Valerianella amarella*
Missouri Violet	*Viola missouriensis*
Grass and allies	
Broadleaf Woodoats	*Chasmanthium latifolium*
Virginia Wildrye	*Elymus virginicus*
Ozarkgrass	*Limmodea arkansana*
Rescue Grass	*Bromus catharticus*
Wooly Rosettegrass	*Dichanthelium acuminatum*
Cedar Sedge	*Carex planostachys*
Giant Spiderwort	*Tradescantia gigantea*
Blue-eyed Grass	*Sisyrinchium ensigerum*
Wild Garlic	*Allium drummondii*

Appendix C

Project/Program	Cost
Surveys	2,619.08
Total	2,619.08